1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

462 241 price of grueling effort that a living can be wrested from its jealous grasp. The women in their fields care for the growing crops, hoeing the ground so that moisture and sun reach the young plants, seeing that the lianas which throw their creepers over the cleared spaces to throttle the tender shoots do not get headway, and, as each crop ripens, attending to its harvesting.

262 243 244 Yams, cassava, and nappi are roots. For their planting some of the crop of the year before is preserved and cut up. But rice and peanuts, or pinda, as these are called here in the bush, and maize, of which the Bush Negroes learned from the Indians, and okra grow from seeds. The rice is planted on a hillside, for the Bush Negro does not grow irrigated rice, but the dry African variety that thrives on the slopes. Cassava, okra, peppers, plantains, peanuts, beans, sugar cane—each crop is allotted its own space, until the newly cleared ground is filled. A woman usually has two fields cut for her; one is called a rice field and one a cassava field. In each, the crops which yield several harvests a year are rotated. The cassava roots take nine months at least to ripen, but it is better to leave them in the ground ten or eleven months.

"It is the time of the great harvest now," the old woman said.

243 244 These were busy days for the women. With their short-handled knives, they cut the rice stalk by stalk and made small sheaves of the golden grain, raked over the dirt so that the peanuts might be found and gathered, chopped the ripe sugar cane with the machetes which they handled with the same sureness as did their men, and dug out the cassava roots so that they might be carried to the village [262] and made into flour for the cassava bread which was the staple of their diet.

"The corn," she said, "is not harvested now. We cut it at a different time; and the melons ripen later, too." At other times of the year there were other harvests, but this one, of the months of July and August, was the principal one.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

sufficient time for the nitrogenous substances to be reduced to fertilizing material. Because of this poverty of the ground and the constant foraging of insect and bird pests—the parrot is notorious among these—the cultivation of food is difficult and laborious for the Bush Negroes and the provision ground must often be moved to a fresh site.

Their main carbohydrate staple is the manioc or bitter cassava. It is a tuber-like plant that grows some three to seven feet in height, the edible portion being the underground root. The root contains the poisonous prussic acid, which must be carefully removed. Bush Negroes have been known to commit suicide by drinking the juice of the cassava. The plant itself resembles the tobacco plant, but has a stalk covered with bark and large roots that look like sweet potatoes.

The roots are harvested, carefully peeled, and reduced to a pulp by being rubbed on the roughened surface of an inclined board, the expelled free juices rolling down the incline into a bowl. The rest of the plant is thrown away. The pulp is stuffed into a cylindrical squeezing contrivance made of reed, known as the *matapee*. It resembles one of those toy finger grippers of straw that children play with. The reeds being flexible, elongating the tube by pulling at the ends reduces the diameter of it; this compresses the contents of the cylinder and squeezes out the deadly juice which then runs off into a bowl below. The matapee is a beautifully woven piece of basketry about five feet long and seven inches in diameter. The upper end is attached to the limb of a tree and a heavy stone is suspended from the lower end, the

/144 cont./
241 time that the runaway slaves took these with them from the plan-
[177] tations then in existence.

It is therefore worthwhile in various respects to explore what is
241 being cultivated. The following summary has been put together
114 from the data of my own observations and from information pro-
[128] vided by various Bush Negroes. This list is not complete; what is lacking, however, is probably of minor importance.

A. Cultivated Crops That Are Grown on the Food Grounds

244 Bitter cassava (kasàba).
[262] This is the most important crop, from which the cassava bread and kwak are made. One plants the shoots in December, but also in March and April. After 12 months the harvest begins; in case of a food shortage they are dug after only seven months. Yellow and white varieties are distinguished according to the color of the contents of the tubers. To the yellow varieties belong: witti tiki, which is kept on the grounds up to two years, blaka tiki; which stands on the grounds only one year, and taja tiki, which provides produce for a long time and is especially good for the making of kwak. To the white varieties belong: amosiang, sanang kasaba,
[252] and domberi. Cassava bread is made from this. In the making of kwak all the colors are mixed together in order to obtain the desired yellow color. Each variety separately provides a less tasty product.

252 On the Marowijne one makes more kwak (kwaka) than cassava
[184] bread, while on the Surinam River and the Saramacca only cassava bread /a map and Figs. 1-14 appear here/ /145/ is baked with the flour. Kwak is prepared in the following manner: The tubers, after they are peeled, are put in water in a korjaal (1) for two

1. korjaal = boat.

days and then grated. This grated cassava is then allowed to sour in a box or a korjaal; after that the grated cassava is expressed

[text continues on p. 21]

/145 cont./
252 with the matapi (2) and subsequently baked on the baking plate (pan),

2. matapi = long tube of plaiting with which one expresses the juice and the water out of the grated cassava.

during which the granular mass is constantly stirred. The kwak [251] ultimately consists of dry yellow grains. One can keep kwak in good condition longer than bread. It is softened with water and eaten with some sugar (if available).

A less-used product is "afringi." For this one grates freshly peeled cassava, then expresses the grated cassava in the matapi, and dries the meal on the fire or in the sun. Subsequently one pounds this meal in the matta (3) and then kneads it with water

3. matta = large wooden mortar.

into little balls. These are boiled together with fish or meat into a soup. One calls this soup "afringi," which literally means "to throw," presumably because one throws the little balls into the pot. The same product is called "apitie" on the Surinam River.

●244 Sweet cassava (kasàba-swieti) is little planted; the tubers are [262] harvested after three months and eaten boiled.

[252] The most important pests in the cassava are: leaf-cutting [825] ants, which cut off the leaves; deer, which eat the young tips and also bite off the stalks; tapirs, which consume the stalks and leaves and also trample many; koni-konis (4), which dig

4. koni-koni = Surinam rabbit.

out and gnaw the tubers; pingos and pakieras (5), which root the

5. pingo and pakiera = wild pigs.

tubers out of the ground and consume them.

/146 cont./

245 Bacoven (bakóeba, bákba).

Planted like the bananas. The growing time varies from 10 to 15 months. The banana-bacove is grown the most. The varieties are indicated with the following names:

bigibakoeba or langa-finga, banana-bacove with long fruit (Gros Michel type); produces the bunch after 10 months and this ripens in five months;

watramama-bakoeba, a kind of congo-bacove originally from French Guiana, short variety, bunch matures in three months;

koboto-bakoeba or soeknoe-finga, small yellow, sweet variety of the size of the apple bacove or smaller (missie-finga); bunch ripens in three months;

indji-bakoeba, short, thick, red variety, sweet in taste, with yellow fruit-flesh; bunch ripens in three months.

[262] The bacoven are only eaten as fresh fruit and are very popu-
[136] lar. /147/ The leaves of bananas and bacoven are sometimes severely eaten by leaf-cutting ants.

244 Tajer (tája).

One finds tajer on all grounds, standing in scattered groups. It is harvested after 8-10 months (August-October), but also continuously thereafter. There are various kinds in use:

agauw, large variety (pomtaja); tubers remain good for a long time; also found in the villages;

244 sjoe, smaller variety with yellowish tuber, tubers remain good for
262 a long time; the leaf is eaten as a vegetable;

dasini, larger variety with yellowish tubers, which is frequently planted because of its tastiness; the harvesting is done in small bits at a time, for the tubers rot quite quickly; the leaf of this too, is used as vegetable; a small variety of dasini is also called chinees taja;

wititaja, smaller variety; tubers remain good for a long time; leaf is also eaten.

252 Tajer tubers are boiled, like potatoes, frequently with fish or meat and oil, into a soup.

/147 cont./

244 Patatas (patáta).

Patatas are planted in patches; they creep with long tendrils in between everything as a weed. Even after the grounds have been abandoned, they continue to grow in the open patches. They are harvested in the long dry season, but there are also three-month varieties. There are white, red, and yellow varieties under the following names:

plata patata, white variety, frequently planted;
lebi (redi) patata, red variety, often runs wild;
abawini, yellow variety, frequently planted on grounds;
sakoela patata, yellow variety, idem.

[252] The tubers are eaten boiled, like potatoes, usually prepared [136] with oil, or cut into little pieces and made into a soup. Rabbits and pigs are likewise lovers of these tubers.

Napi (napi).

Napi is planted scattered next to sticks in order to allow the vines to climb. It is not missing on a single ground. The harvest time falls in the long dry season from September to November. There are red and white varieties, which are known by the following names:

kakaboeroe, red on the inside, with red peel;
gangasombo, white on the inside, with red peel;
witti napi, white on the inside, with yellow peel;
finga napi, purple-red variety with divided tubers;
waka waka-napi, purple-red variety, creeping, with large, long tubers.

[252] Napi is eaten boiled like a potato. Most of the varieties are used unpeeled; when they are prepared with meat, however, one removes the peel from the tubers.

/148/

Yams (yamesi).

The yam is found everywhere and is planted scattered. The harvest time is October or later. Two varieties are known:
maka-yamesi, with thorns on stalk, planted with buds from the tubers;
afakõn, planted with stalk shoots.

/148 cont./

244 Yam roots frequently become very large. One cuts them
252 up and boils the pieces like tajer tubers.

Maize (kaloe).

243 Maize is sowed together with other crops and provides one of the first products; the harvesting is done after three months
[184] (March). Only one variety is known. Sometimes special maize plots are laid out (Paramaccaners).

252 The young maize is eaten boiled or roasted, sometimes also pounded and boiled to a porridge (kaloepapa). A well-known delicacy is "ansowé" or "asogrie," made of roasted dry kernels finely pounded and mixed with sugar.

244 Watermelon (watramoen)

This is planted in patches everywhere on the grounds; the harvest time falls in March. There are two varieties in use:
[262] hesiskin and blakaskin, both of which provide small, oval-round, white-spotted fruit with a bland-sweet, light-pink fruit-flesh; the fruit is eaten fresh.

Pumpkin (pampoen).

One finds this plant in many places, but never in great numbers.

Only the oblong dark green variety is known; the harvest
[252] time is from April on, and a long time afterwards. The fruit is cut in pieces, boiled, and eaten.

Okra (okrò).

This crop is generally grown on the food grounds; it provides edible fruit after three months, in February and March. Three varieties are distinguished:
sebiwiki, with short fruit;
afoesibobi, with short fruit;
diatoetoe, with long fruit.

252 The young green fruit is cut into pieces and boiled to a soup, usually together with tajer, meat, and so forth.

/148 cont./

244 Pinda /peanuts/ (pienda) and djoekapinda /Djuka peanuts/ (agobo).

Both are planted in patches on the grounds and not infrequently also in the villages; they bloom in March and are harvested after the rice, in June and July. The quantities that are harvested are small and amount to one or two kerosene-tins per person. Only one variety is known of both the ordinary pinda and the djoekapinda.

[252] One boils the pinda into a soup or makes peanut butter by roasting it and then pounding it in the matta. The Saramaccaners call the djoekapinda "gobogobo."

/149/Bongila.

This is related to abongra (Sesamum) with white blossoms and with flat white seeds in long capsules. It is quite often sowed broadcast among other plants, and the stalks with the capsules are harvested in June. Only one variety is known.

252 The ripe seeds, flat and white, after having first been dried in a pan on the fire, are pounded in a matta. Then one adds some salt and uses this product like peanut butter on cassava bread.

[244] It is tasty and nutritious. On the Surinam River this plant is called "waja" and the seeds are baked with the cassava flour in the bread. Like abongra, this plant is probably also of African origin.

Beans (pesi).

244 These are used very little. String beans /kousebandjes/ -- runner beans with long thin pods -- are known, and a variety

[262] with white blossoms which makes pods 20 centimeters long. Other varieties of beans are not grown, although the Bush Negroes very much like to eat pesi varieties.

249 Sugar cane (keeng or sigáloe).

This is nowhere lacking, and aside from the grounds it is also planted in the villages. With bananas it remains standing for years on the abandoned grounds and is also cut there. Three varieties are distinguished:

[262] abaiboesi, red and black marked stalks; only eaten fresh;

/151 cont./
249 greatly to the beautification of the village. The Bush Negroes use
[232] the red dyestuff from the seeds to smear on the dogs against vermin.

Cotton (katoen).

248 One sees it standing in various places along the edges of the
283 villages and among the dwelling huts. The cotton itself is in ex-
[286] ceptional cases used by the women for spinning. Calf bands (sepoe) are made out of cotton thread after the Indian model, and sometimes hammocks also.

Coffee.

245 Is found here and there in the forest along the edge of the village (Drietabbetje, Poeketti). It is the small variety, probably
[272] Coffea arabica. The beans are used for coffee. The trees probably grew from kernels that at one time were taken by slaves from the plantations.

Calabash (kabasi).

244 Grows everywhere among the dwelling huts and in neglected corners. A distinction is made between kabasi and pikien soepoen.
[415] The wood-like pericarps of both varieties are used for all kinds of purposes, especially for utensils (bowls, spoons) and as "koej" for scooping the korjalen empty.

Kasjoen (kasoeng).

245 Occurs here and there and ordinarily does not supply much
[262] fruit; the latter is eaten fresh, the kernels sometimes roasted
[252] like pinda.

Mappa.

Probably a variety of Tabernaemontana (Apocynaceae). Not infrequently in May one sees the women returning from the grounds with pear-shaped /152/ (up to ten centimeters long) yellow fruit,
[262] which they have gathered from a small forest tree. The fruit is eaten fresh; one first taps on the rind with a piece of wood in order to concentrate the milk sap in it, peels the fruit, and the

/152 cont./
245 white cucumber-like fruit flesh is eaten. The taste is refreshingly
262 tart.

249 Ricinus /castor-oil plant/ (karapata).
789 Is to be found in all villages and especially on refuse heaps.
302 The leaf is used for obia, the oil from the kernels as a hair oil.

Pepper (péprë).
244 Grows as a small shrub near the houses or along the edge of
[252] the village. The variety with small red fruit occurs especially frequently. The fruit is eaten boiled in meat soup.

Koemboe (komoe).
245 Stands in individual specimens in and along the villages and
[252] in the forest. The kernels of this palm are gladly eaten, softened with warm water and pounded into koemboe soup. The fruit is ripe in February-May. A large variety is patawah.

Maripa (maïpa).
[262] Absent in not a single village. The fruit provides a white,
[252] fatty fruit-flesh that is eaten fresh (May). The pits are dried and pounded to pieces with a stone in order to obtain the three kernels. After having dried these (in the sun), one boils from them a food oil.

Awarra palms (awá).
[263] Stand in little groups in each Bush Negro village. The orange fruit, which is ripe in February-March, sometimes also in June